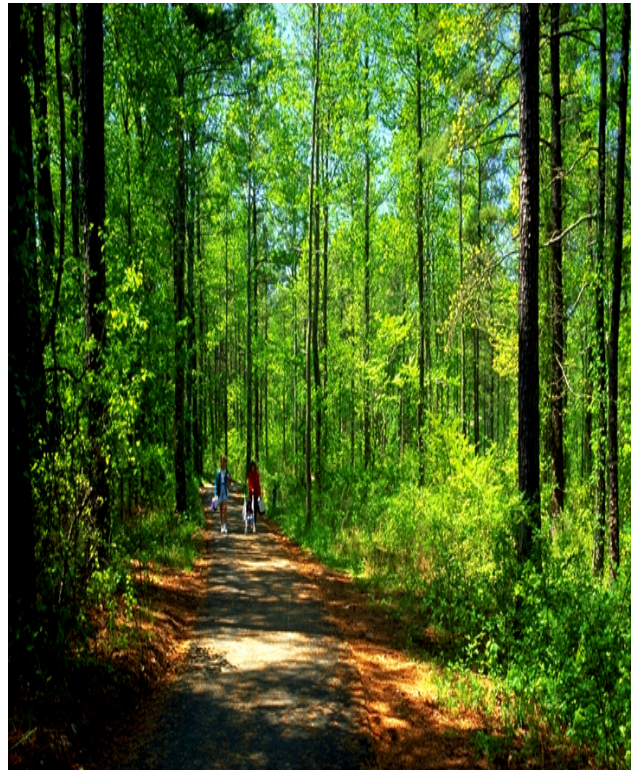




A report by The Trust for Public Land

The Greenprint for Sandy Springs, Georgia



Greenprint Sandy Springs represents a cooperative endeavor funded by the City of Sandy Springs, Friends of Sandy Springs (FOSS), the Sandy Springs Conservancy (SSC), through a grant by the UPS Foundation, and The Trust for Public Land (TPL). All of which provided funding to create a parks and green space conservation plan to guide the city over the next several years.

Many individual stakeholders and interested parties contributed to the process. The City of Sandy Springs and TPL gratefully acknowledge the following individuals for dedicating their time and energy toward Greenprint Sandy Springs:

STEERING COMMITTEE

Ensured quality control and guided the greenprint process

Bruce Weiner, Friends of Sandy Springs
Linda Bain, Sandy Springs Conservancy
Nancy Leathers, Director, Community Development
John McDonough, City Manager
Judy Parker, APR, Director of Media and Communications

STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE

Community representatives established greenprint goals

The Honorable Eva Galambos, Mayor, City of Sandy Springs
Councilman Doug MacGinnitie, District 1
Carolyn Axt, District 2 Appointee
Dan Brown, National Park Service
Nina Cramer, Trees Sandy Springs
DJ DeLong, Heritage Sandy Springs
Tim Fish, Sandy Springs Conservancy
Jeff Gathers, District 1 Appointee
Gene Jordan, District 3 Appointee
Fearn LaBon, District 4 Appointee
Bridget Lawlor, Leadership Sandy Springs
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Ronnie Young, Director, Sandy Springs Recreation and Parks

TECHNICAL ADVISORY TEAM

Local experts providing scientific and technical expertise to develop greenprint models

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Executive Summary

In 2008, the City engaged The Trust for Public Land (TPL), a national non-profit land conservation organization, to develop a long-term conservation, parks and greenspace vision called Greenprint Sandy Springs.

Greenprinting is TPL's unique blend of Geographic Information System (GIS) modeling technology and community participation designed to identify the highest and best opportunities for new park creation, greenway and trail development, natural resource protection and connectivity. The process fosters collaboration among diverse community stakeholders, who set the Greenprint goals that lead to opportunity maps, implementation strategies and interactive decision-making tools.

Through the Greenprint Sandy Springs community participation process, the following Greenprint goals and criteria were identified and ranked in priority order:

Promote Connectivity

- Connect trails, parks and green space to employment centers, community facilities and neighborhoods.
- Create greenways with utility easements and other opportunities.

Increase Recreation Opportunities

- Improve park equity through even distribution of recreational spaces and facilities for those under the age of 18.
- Identify access points to National Park Service sites.
- Identify vacant land near schools and churches.
- Improve park equity through even distribution of recreational spaces and facilities for those aged 65 and older.
- Provide waterfront access and scenic views.

Mitigate Traffic Congestion

- Identify green space opportunities near existing transportation infrastructure.
- Identify green space opportunities adjacent to high-density development.

What is a Greenprint?

A strategic planning, communication and decision-making tool based on local priorities to meet community parks, recreational and environmental goals. A Greenprint results in a set of maps, interactive web-based tools and action strategies designed to:

- Connect where people live to where they can enjoy the outdoors;
- Create more pedestrian-friendly communities that reduce traffic; and
- Enhance the economic vitality of the overall community as a place to live work and play.

A Greenprint is NOT:

- A map of land use prohibitions.
- Determined by a single perspective;
- Limited only to protecting wildlife and biodiversity.
- For condemning or taking land.

These goals and criteria formed the foundation of the Greenprint Sandy Springs model, which resulted in a series of color-coded opportunity maps that provide objective, graphic representation of the City of Sandy Springs' highest and best opportunities for acquiring lands to create new parks and greenways. These maps and the data behind them will be available as part of an interactive, web-based Internet Mapping Site (IMS) for the City to:

- View and analyze Greenprint results;
- Create interactive maps using markup tools;
- Share and print maps;
- Save maps in private workspaces for ongoing use;
- Visualize and query GIS data layers in order to create property-specific profiles and strategic reports.

Mapping, however, represents only one facet of the Greenprint. While the mapping provides focus of human and financial resources, the Greenprint provides discussion of key implementation strategies designed to facilitate on-the-ground implementation of the Greenprint goals. Such strategies, discussed, include:

- **Parcel-level Prioritization of Greenprint Models** – Further narrows the identified land conservation candidates shown on the maps, in order to hone in on individual parcels that present the best opportunities and that possess some characteristic(s) that distinguish them from others for consideration.
- **Public-Private Partnerships** – Identifies key institutions and other entities that could share costs for development and operations of recreational opportunities.
- **Dedicated Funding Source** – Local conservation finance mechanisms that create a dedicated source of green space funding have the power to provide a tangible means to implement Greenprint goals.
- **Developer Incentives** – Because communities' economies are so intricately tied to commercial and residential development, wise communities provide a slate of meaningful incentives to encourage the type of development that provides a balance between the built and natural environments.

Greenprint Sandy Springs offers city leaders, partners and residents a flexible communication tool to use for the implementation of its parks, recreation and natural resource goals.

GREENPRINT SANDY SPRINGS

The City of Sandy Springs, Georgia is young in a number of ways. It was founded in 2005, when more than 94 percent of the area's residents approved incorporation. The median age of the population is 34, illustrating that it is the city of choice for many families and young professionals in the Metro Atlanta region. A strong corporate community and the meandering Chattahoochee River add to the City's draw.

Despite being the sixth largest city in Georgia, Sandy Springs' quality of life – location, small community feel and natural landscapes – is what the City's founders sought to protect and build upon in their efforts to create a livable and lovable city within Fulton County. Minimizing traffic congestion, enhancing the walkability of neighborhoods and commercial areas, creating new and improved parks and recreation facilities, improving water quality and protecting nature all factor prominently in the Sandy Springs Comprehensive Plan, the document that guides the City's growth and development. The City has subsequently followed with a Tree Conservation Ordinance, watershed and stormwater policies, and a comprehensive transportation plan that calls for improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and a recreation and parks master plan.

CITY OF SANDY SPRINGS RECREATION AND PARKS MASTER PLAN

A Recreation and Park Master Plan (RPMP) was completed as part of the Comprehensive Plan. This document assessed the City's growth trends, inventoried existing parks and facilities, established a baseline service standard, and identified community recreation issues, demands and opportunities.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has established a national Level of Service (LOS) standard of 6.25-10.5 acres of parkland and green space per 1,000 residents. In the Master Plan, the City of Sandy Springs adopted this standard as its minimum target level of service, thereby creating a City-wide shortfall of almost 420 acres to meet current and future City parks and green space needs. The Recreation and Parks Plan also noted that the former Fulton County parks transferred to the City were aging and did not provide sufficient recreation facilities, such as soccer fields and walking trails, to meet city needs.

The Recreation and Parks Master Plan called for the City to:

- Acquire land for new park development and trail linkages;
- Provide a wider range of recreational opportunities;
- Provide a broader range of active and passive recreational facilities;
- Provide an expanded range of recreation program offerings;
- Provide connectivity across the city through greenways and trails;
- Develop formal park-school operation agreements;
- Improve system-wide maintenance
- Identify new and permanent funding mechanisms for park development, maintenance and operations.

Almost immediately Sandy Springs looked to addressing some of these issues:

Design Program –Sandy Springs initiated a design program that plans for new signage at all parks and recreation sites to highlight the transfer of lands from Fulton County into the City.

Morgan Falls Park - In 2007 the City initiated a community engagement effort for the master plan of Morgan Falls Park. The new plan calls for reconfiguring of the athletic fields at the park's entrance so that more sports, such as baseball, football and soccer can be accommodated. The new master plan improves waterfront access on surplus Georgia Power property with a refurbished boat ramp to allow for paddlers to reach the Chattahoochee River, and a new fishing pier. Upon completion, the park will offer picnic areas, hiking trails with river overlooks and a dog park. This work is now underway.

Hammond Park - The City's most heavily used park is now undergoing a redesign and redevelopment. A community participation plan has been underway to gather input into the site planning process. Early plans for this redesigned park call for a state-of-the-art gymnasium, and greatly expanded parking facilities among other improvements.

As the next step in the Recreation and Parks Master Plan, the City desired a nimble implementation strategy that could help assess where new lands could be acquired for parks and trails that would best meet the population's green space needs. To direct that process, City leaders engaged The Trust for Public Land (TPL), a national non-profit land conservation organization, and its Greenprint services to lead that effort.

WHAT IS A GREENPRINT?

A Greenprint is a strategic planning, communication and decision-making tool. It is based on local input, priorities and data sources that are interpreted into a set of maps and computer analyses that demonstrate opportunities to:

- Connect where people live to where they can enjoy the outdoors;
- Create more pedestrian-friendly communities that reduce traffic;
- Improve the public's ability to access waterways for fishing, paddling and wildlife viewing; and,
- Enhance the economic vitality of the overall community as a place to live, work and play.

Greenprinting is The Trust for Public Land's (TPL) unique application of Geographic Information System (GIS) modeling technology. It helps local governments make informed decisions and identifies the best opportunities for new park creation, greenway development,

A Greenprint is NOT

- A map of land-use prohibitions
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natural resource protection and connectivity. A Greenprint is not a set of static maps, rather, it is a dynamic, interactive web-based tool that guides actions that will result in healthier, more vibrant and green communities.

TPL's Greenprint process fosters collaboration within the community by bringing together diverse community stakeholders who create easy-to-understand priorities for land conservation. The process then considers these community priorities in combination with broader citywide environmental, social, economic, educational, cultural and recreational interests and uses them as input along with City data to produce graphic results that illustrate the best opportunities for green space acquisition. The process involves these key steps:

CONSTITUENCY BUILDING

- Identifying Community Values
- Establishing Conservation Goals and Criteria to Express Community Values

DATA GATHERING AND ANALYSIS

- Understanding Existing Conditions
- Assembling Local GIS Data
- Creating Models
- Ranking Goals and Criteria
- Translating Models into Opportunity Maps

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Identifying Practical Strategies for Implementation
- Developing an Interactive, Internet-based Mapping and Analysis Service

TPL begins with local input and information, analyzes the data, and delivers strategic recommendations and tools to engage and inform the recreation and green space policies of elected officials and city leaders.

GREENPRINT SANDY SPRINGS METHODOLOGY

CONSTITUENCY BUILDING

The Trust for Public Land works with communities to fulfill their conservation visions. In so doing, TPL works closely with local leaders, residents and technical experts to ensure that the final recommendations have broad community support and incorporate the best available data and science.

Local participation in the Sandy Springs Greenprint was organized through the following three committees:

Steering Committee - The Steering Committee was comprised of eight individuals from TPL, the City, the Sandy Springs Conservancy, Friends of Sandy Springs and other key agencies important to the overall greenprint. The role of the Steering Committee was to guide the greenprint by ensuring that it employed a legitimate community engagement process while keeping in synch with other City plans and priorities. The Steering Committee met three times, in addition to participating in meetings with the broader stakeholder group.

Constituency Building Milestones

May 19, 2008

Stakeholder Goal-Setting Workshop

October 20, 2008

Stakeholder Greenprint Model Weighting Workshop

November 17, 2008

Stakeholder Implementation Strategies Workshop

Stakeholder Committee – The Stakeholder Committee, comprised of community residents and representatives of local organizations appointed by the City Council, met three times during the Greenprint process. Participants included citizens at-large, as well as representatives of organizations with an interest in parks, natural resource protection, recreation, and land use and development. Stakeholder Committee members participated in defining the Greenprints goals. These goals formed the foundation of the computer modeling effort that mapped which lands should be protected in order to meet the community’s park and recreation needs. Utilizing the first set of draft maps created by the computer models, the committee convened a second time to prioritize the goals and criteria, and refine the maps. The Stakeholder Committee convened a final time to discuss viable funding and implementation strategies that will support the acquisition of the identified lands.

Technical Advisory Team (TAT) – The Technical Advisory Team was populated with City of Sandy Springs experts in Geographic Information Systems, water and natural resource protection, and management issues. The TAT provided the scientific and local technical expertise needed to support the development of the Greenprint models and mapping. The TAT met five times during the model’s development to ensure quality control. They also participated in the broader stakeholder meetings.

GREENPRINT GOALS AND CRITERIA

Through the above-described Constituency Building process, the Stakeholder Committee set the primary goals for the Greenprint process. To better define those goals, the TAT identified a list of supportive criteria. Finally, the City Council provided policy guidance to ensure consistency of the goals and criteria with broader City policies. The following are the identified goals and their related criteria:

Goal: Increase Recreation Opportunities

- Identify vacant land near schools and churches
- Identify access to local national parklands
- Ensure park equity (even distribution of recreational spaces and facilities)
- Pursue partnerships with governmental and institutional landowners (implementation strategy)
- Provide waterfront access/protect scenic views and sites

Goal: Promote Connectivity

- Connect trails, parks and green space to work places, community facilities and neighborhoods
 - Identify connectivity opportunities
 - Develop greenways with multiuse trails to connect parks and green spaces
 - Promote bicycle and pedestrian travel nodes for access to parks and community facilities (also related to Mitigate Traffic Congestion goal)
- Identify utility easements and pipelines for trails development and linkages to other green areas

Goal: Mitigate Traffic Congestion

- Identify vacant parcels and green space opportunities utilizing current and future traffic congestion volumes
 - Identify green space opportunities near existing transportation infrastructure (anything within ¼ mile)
- Identify green space opportunities adjacent to high-density development
- Create green space as an integral part of property development or redevelopment (implementation strategy)

Goal: Promote and coordinate dedicated green space with development and redevelopment projects (all implementation strategies)

- Develop incentives for preservation of open space
- Reduce environmental impacts of development/mitigate stormwater runoff
- Encourage zoning with appropriate incentives to promote and create greenspace.
- Integrate parks with development

For purposes of the computer modeling work, TPL determined how to translate this list of goals and criteria into GIS data input that could be analyzed and mapped to produce the desired graphic representation of these greenprint priorities.

To support that effort, the Technical Advisory Team ranked the *criteria* amongst themselves in priority order based on which items could provide the greatest community need and be most effective for the modeling exercise. Subsequently, the Stakeholders reviewed the TAT's recommendations and made some minor adjustments.

Finally, to give high level direction to the Greenprint, the Stakeholders, through a consensus process, ranked the desired *goals* amongst each other and put them in priority order; also based on which goals best defined and addressed the community's needs.

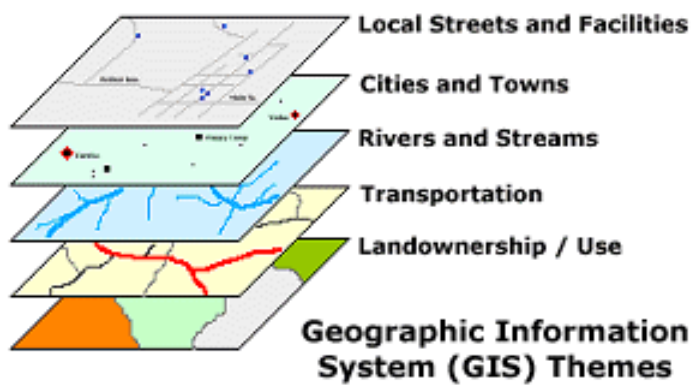
This series of complicated rankings was an exercise in deciding what were the most important priorities for the City to carry forward into their green space program; the results were input into the computer modeling process. The table below shows the results of those weightings and rankings.

Table 1. Greenprint Sandy Springs GIS Model Goals and Criteria

Greenprint Sandy Springs GIS Model Goals and Criteria			
Goal	Goal Weight	Criteria	Criteria Weight
Promote Connectivity	60%		
		Connect trails, Parks and Green space to Employment Centers, Community Facilities and Neighborhoods	60%
		Create Greenways with Utility Easements and Other Opportunities	40%
Increase Recreation Opportunities	30%		
		Park Equity (even distribution of recreational spaces and facilities) – Under age 18	30%
		Identify Access to National Parks	20%
		Identify Vacant Land Near Schools	20%
		Identify Vacant Land Near Churches	20%
		Park Equity (even distribution of recreational spaces and facilities) – Seniors	5%
		Provide Waterfront Access and Scenic Views	5%
Mitigate Traffic Congestion	10%		
		Identify Green space Opportunities Near Existing Transportation Infrastructure	50%
		Identify Green space Opportunities Adjacent to High-Density Development	50%

The results of the above rankings became the basis of the Greenprint Sandy Springs computer modeling effort.

In the model, each criteria row in the above table was translated into a set or layer of data in the Greenprint model that would start to identify parcels for green space preservation.



Graphic 1 depicts how GIS data layers are overlaid to build Greenprint models.

Each goal, with its allied criteria, was then overlaid in priority order (ranked order) to then further select and identify high priority lands for conservation.

Any criteria that could not be mapped, such as those that relate to coordinating policies, were addressed later in the Greenprint process as potential implementation strategies.

GREENPRINT SANDY SPRINGS OPPORTUNITY MAPS

Per the last table, the three Greenprint Sandy Springs goals that were mapped and modeled are: 1) **promote connectivity**, 2) **increase recreation opportunities**; and 3) **mitigate traffic congestion**. The Greenprint Opportunity maps, shown on the following pages, are the graphic representation of the modeling results and provide an objective representation of the City of Sandy Springs' best opportunities for acquiring lands to achieve their green space goals across the City landscape.

The maps are color-coded based on the criteria weightings (detailed in the previous section) that identify where Sandy Springs can most efficiently and effectively direct its resources to meet the Greenprint goals. The most intense colors indicate the best opportunities.



Dark Red = Highest Opportunity



Dark Orange = High Opportunity



Orange = Moderate Opportunity



Yellow-Orange = Moderately Low Opportunity



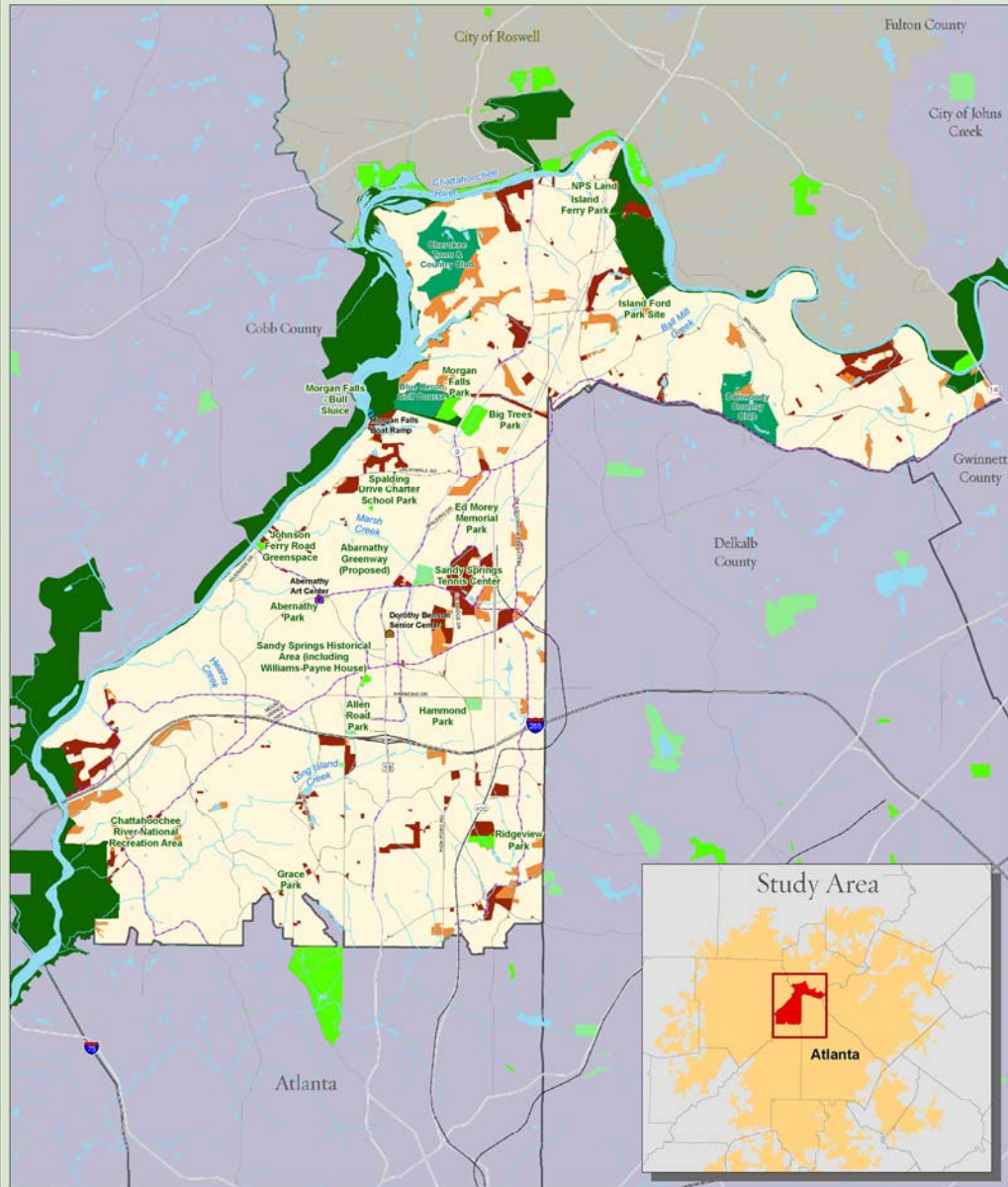
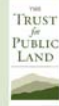
Yellow = Low Opportunity

PROMOTE CONNECTIVITY

The maps on the following two pages show the best opportunities to create a network of existing and new green spaces that would promote connectivity throughout the City of Sandy Springs.

The “*Promote Connectivity*” map illustrates where the selected criteria under the connectivity goal identifies the best opportunities for creating hubs in an interconnected trail and greenway system throughout the city. Greenways and trails are critical in connecting the City of Sandy Springs with the Chattahoochee River and other National Park Service (NPS) lands. The NPS has initiated its own trail program that plans to create new trails and greenways on both sides of the river. The Greenprint model envisions where these opportunities could best occur and links them all together with the City’s greenway network.

Greenprint Sandy Springs Promote Connectivity



Promote Connectivity Priorities

- High (Dark Red)
- Moderate (Orange)

Parks and Protected Land

- Municipal (Light Green)
- County (Medium Green)
- Federal (Dark Green)
- Golf Course (Light Green)

Transportation

- Interstate (Thick Grey Line)
- Highway (Thin Grey Line)
- Major Road (Thin Grey Line)
- MARTA Rail Line (Thick Grey Line)
- Bicycle Trail (Thin Grey Line)

Waterbodies

- Lakes and Ponds (Blue)
- Rivers and Streams (Blue)
- Sandy Springs Boundary (Dashed Line)
- Roswell City Limits (Dashed Line)

This map displays the results of the Promote Connectivity goal within the Greenprint Sandy Springs prioritization analysis. The degree of priority for each area is shown with a color scale with dark red representing high priority and orange representing moderate priority.

This goal includes the following criteria:

- Connect Trails, Parks, and Greenspace to Workspace, community facilities, and Neighborhoods 60 %
- Create Greenways with Utility Easements and Other Opportunities 40 %

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Created in ArcMap 9.3.1
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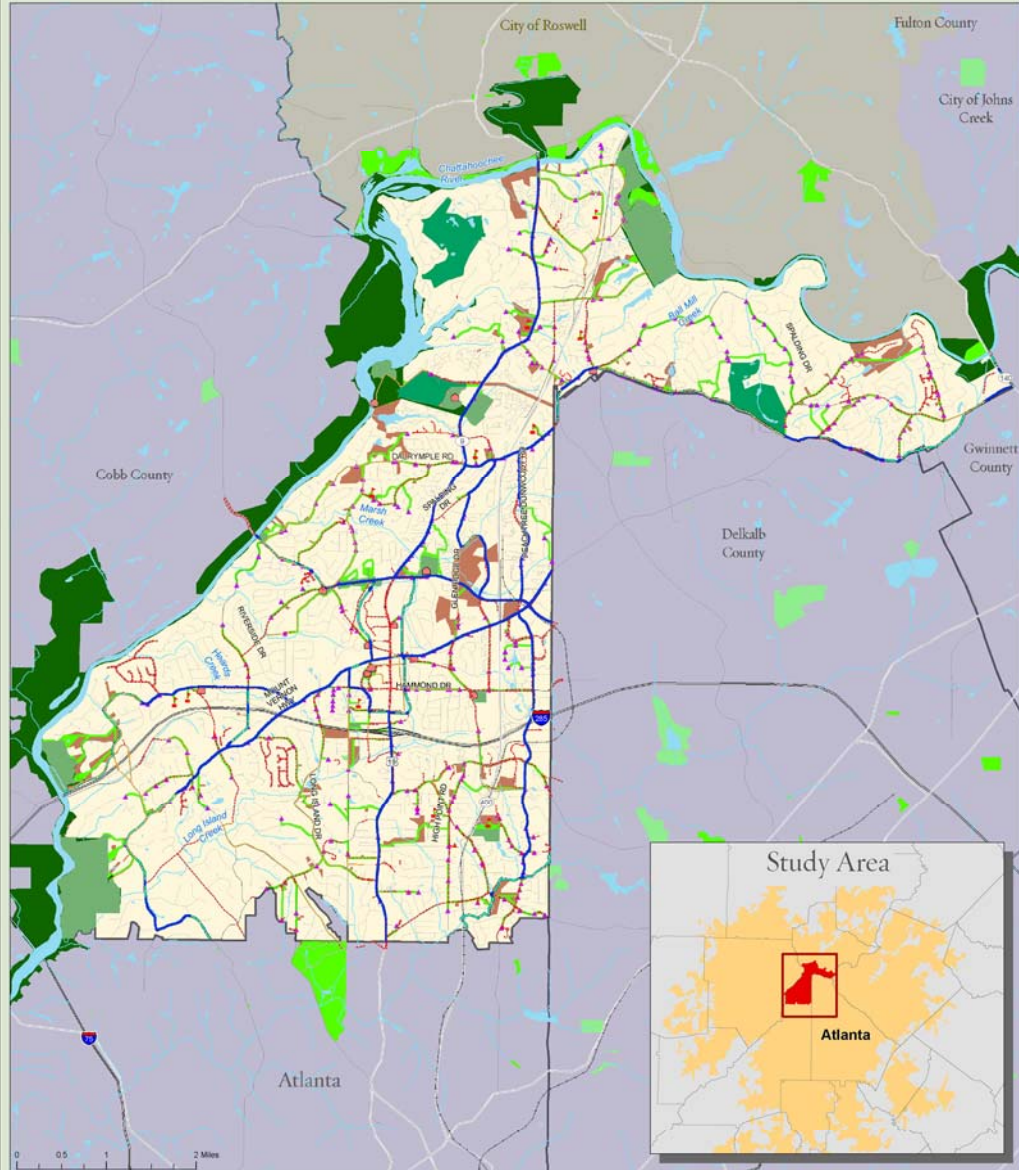
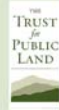
Connect Trails, Parks and Greenspace to Workspace, Community Facilities and Neighborhoods

The “*Connect Trails, Parks and Greenspace to Workspace, Community Facilities and Neighborhood*” map depicts the mapped results for the top-ranked *criteria* under the **Promote Connectivity** goal. This model envisions residents being able to walk or bike safely to schools, parks, employment areas and other essential services. The model that underlies this map utilizes the City’s sidewalk plan and highlights those sidewalks that will be critical to creating a citywide walkable community.

Sidewalks will have to be re-imagined to be wider to support bikes, strollers, walkers and runners without conflict. Utility easements factor into this model as well in creating potential greenways under power lines and along other city easements, which would offer a more natural environment to move from one place to another, away from the hum of traffic.

Greenprint Sandy Springs

Connect Trails, Parks, and Greenspace to Workspace, Community facilities, and Neighborhoods



Hubs Existing Sidewalk Planned Sidewalk Bike Path with Sidewalks Bike Path without Sidewalks Destinations School Major Civic Destination Neighborhood Node Connection Opportunities Opportunities Along Connections Greenspace Opportunities	Parks and Protected Land Municipal County Federal Golf Course Transportation Interstate Highway Major Road MARTA Rail Line Waterbodies Lakes and Ponds Rivers and Streams
--	--

This map identifies opportunities for connecting destinations, which include parks, neighborhood access points and major civic destinations to Sandy Springs' existing connectivity hub, which are the city's bike routes with sidewalks.

Opportunities were ranked in order of importance:
 Highest rank - vacant lands, forested lands, and wetlands
 Second rank - sidewalks without bike trails, and planned sidewalks
 Third rank - biketrails without sidewalks, and roads without sidewalks

Greenspace connection opportunities are prioritized in the Promote Connectivity goal map.

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RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

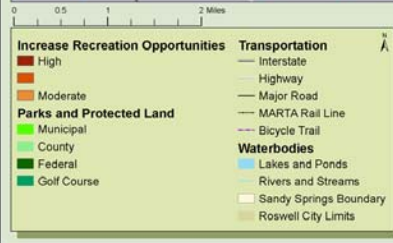
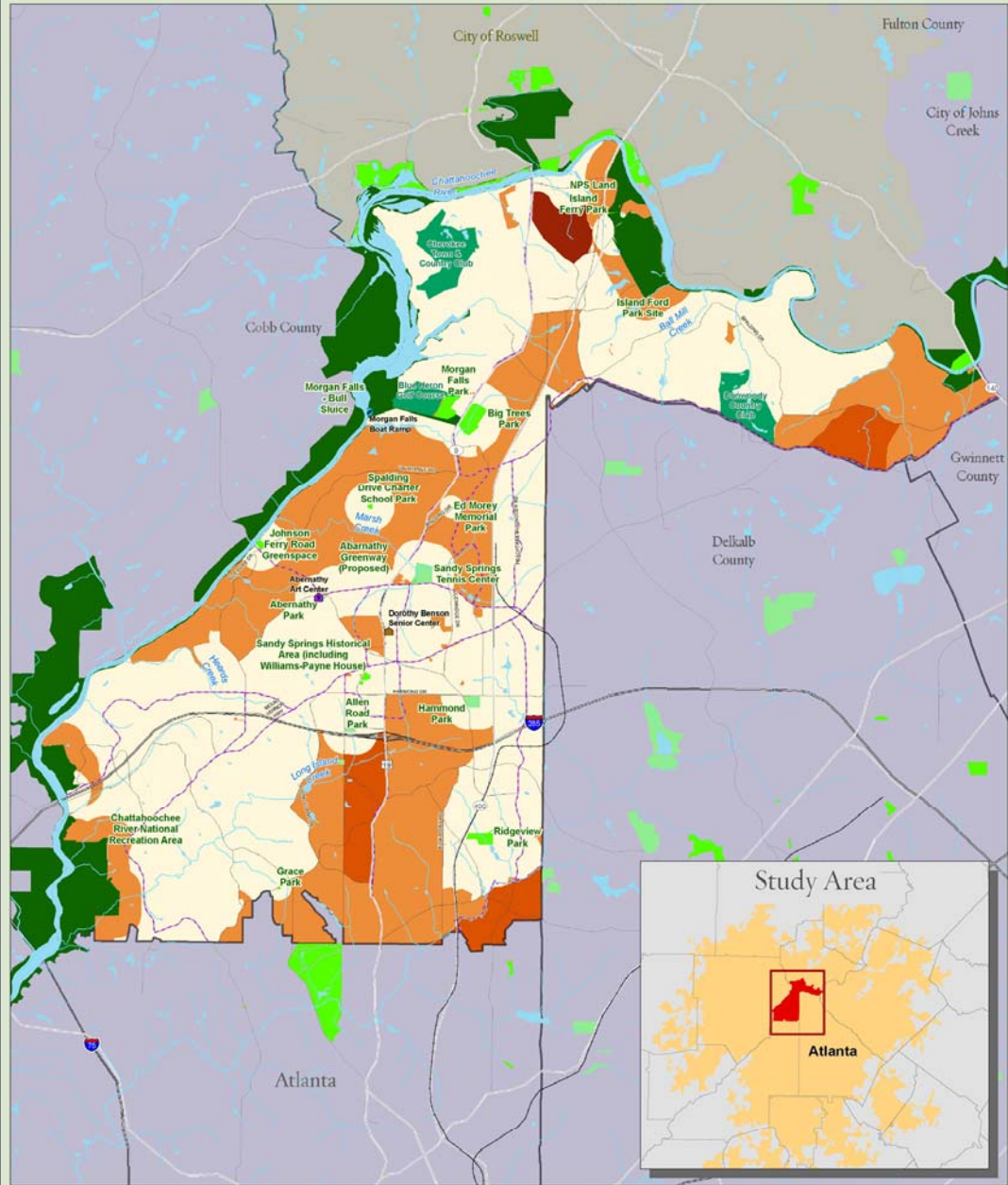
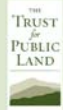
The light circles that surround the existing green spaces on this map show the current service areas for each park; this is typically considered to be a half a mile distance from a park. The darker colored areas in between the lighter service areas indicate areas of deficiency in the provision of recreational opportunities, especially for those under 18 years of age and active seniors, defined as 65 years and older.

Because of the intensity of development and multifamily dwellings along Roswell Road, the map illustrates the greatest deficiency of recreation opportunities along this corridor. While much of that corridor is marked by commercial/retail strip mall development now, this map projects the notion of including green redevelopment as part of the City's future plans.

The Recreational Opportunity computer model utilized schools and churches, and vacant land around them, as joint-use facilities to maximize opportunity and share investment. This is an idea that was brought forth during the Stakeholder process and it proposes maximizing the use of the public facilities that are already paid for and in-place, by multi-purposing them for general citizen usage outside scheduled school/worship hours and activities.

While Sandy Springs enjoys a bountiful 22 miles of Chattahoochee River waterfront, unfortunately, there is limited access to this shoreline due to the combination of topographic constraints and the pattern of private property ownership. Current public access to the river is provided at the City's Morgan Falls Park and in the National Park Service lands. This map highlights a few areas where improved waterfront access could be explored.

Greenprint Sandy Springs Increase Recreation Opportunities



This map displays the results of the Increase Recreation Opportunities goal of the Greenprint Sandy Springs prioritization analysis. The degree of priority for each area is shown with a color scale with dark red representing high priority and orange representing moderate priority.

This goal includes the following criteria:

Park Equity - Kids (Even Distribution of Recreational Spaces and Facilities)	30 %
Park Equity - Seniors (Even Distribution of Recreational Spaces and Facilities)	5 %
Provide Waterfront Access and Scenic Views	5 %
Identify Access to National Parks	20 %
Identify Vacant Land Near Schools	20 %
Identify Vacant Land Near Churches	20 %

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TRAFFIC MITIGATION

We asked the Greenprint model the following question:

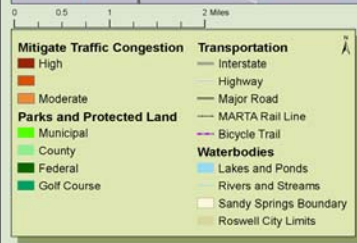
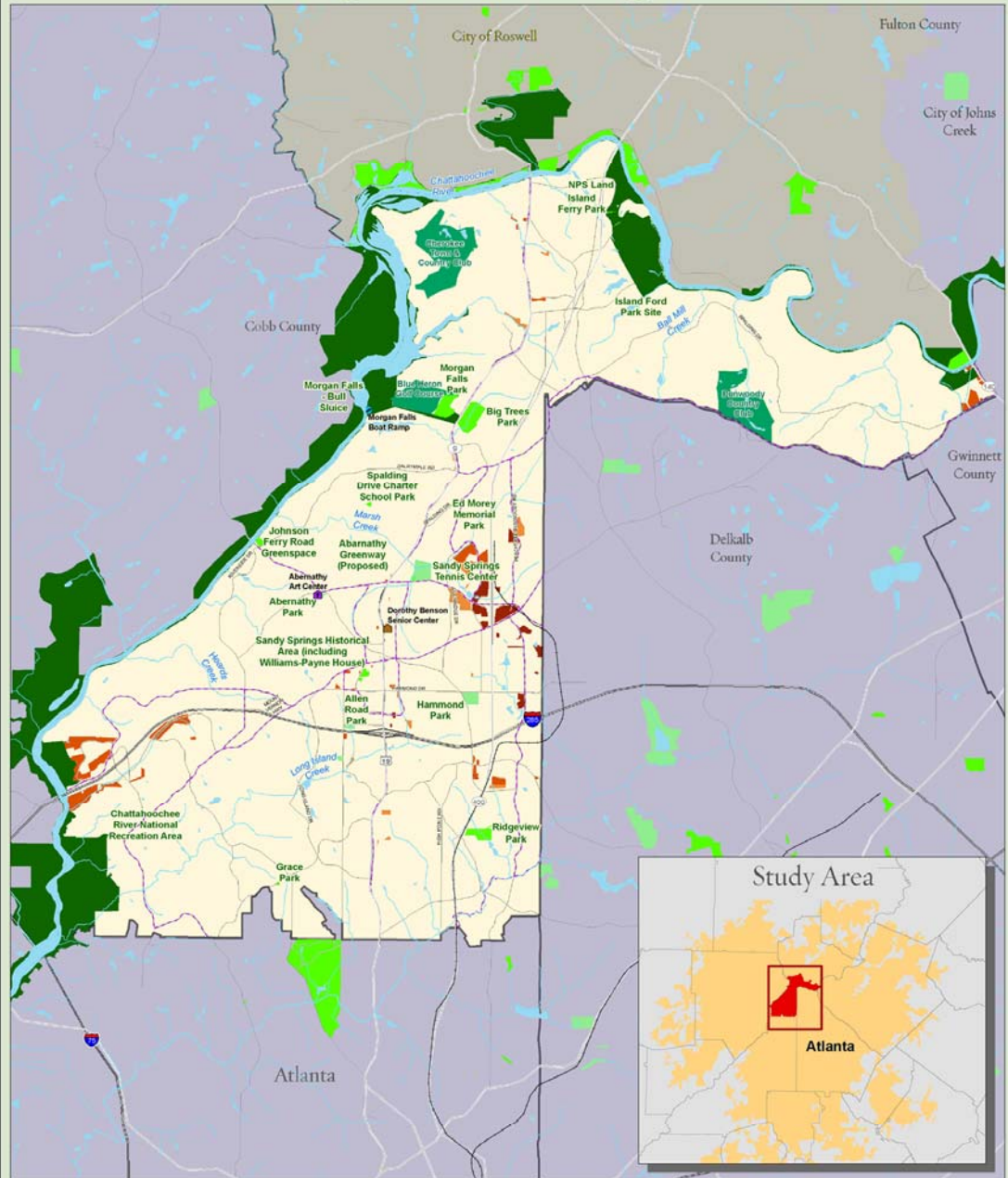
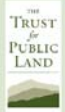
If certain areas slated for development were instead used as parks and green space, would traffic congestion be minimized?

The answer is yes.

Getting people out of their cars and walking has health benefits as well as social and environmental benefits, like building community and cutting down on noise and air pollution. Current research shows that people who live within a 15-minute walk of a greenway, trail or park are 25 percent more likely to participate in outdoor recreation – reducing stress, controlling weight, minimizing heart disease, creating safer neighborhoods and bringing beauty into spaces where concrete flourishes.

This map shows where this scenario of new parks, green spaces and trails would alleviate traffic congestion on the City's most traveled roads, should the highlighted lands be converted into green spaces.

Greenprint Sandy Springs Mitigate Traffic Congestion



This map displays the results of the Mitigate Traffic Congestion goal within the Greenprint Sandy Springs prioritization analysis. The degree of priority for each area is shown with a color scale with dark red representing high priority and orange representing moderate priority.

This goal includes the following criteria:

- | | |
|---|------|
| Identify Greenspace Opportunities Near Existing Transportation Infrastructure | 50 % |
| Identify Greenspace Opportunities Adjacent to High-density Development | 50 % |

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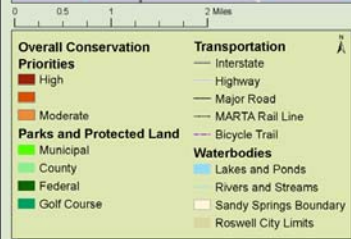
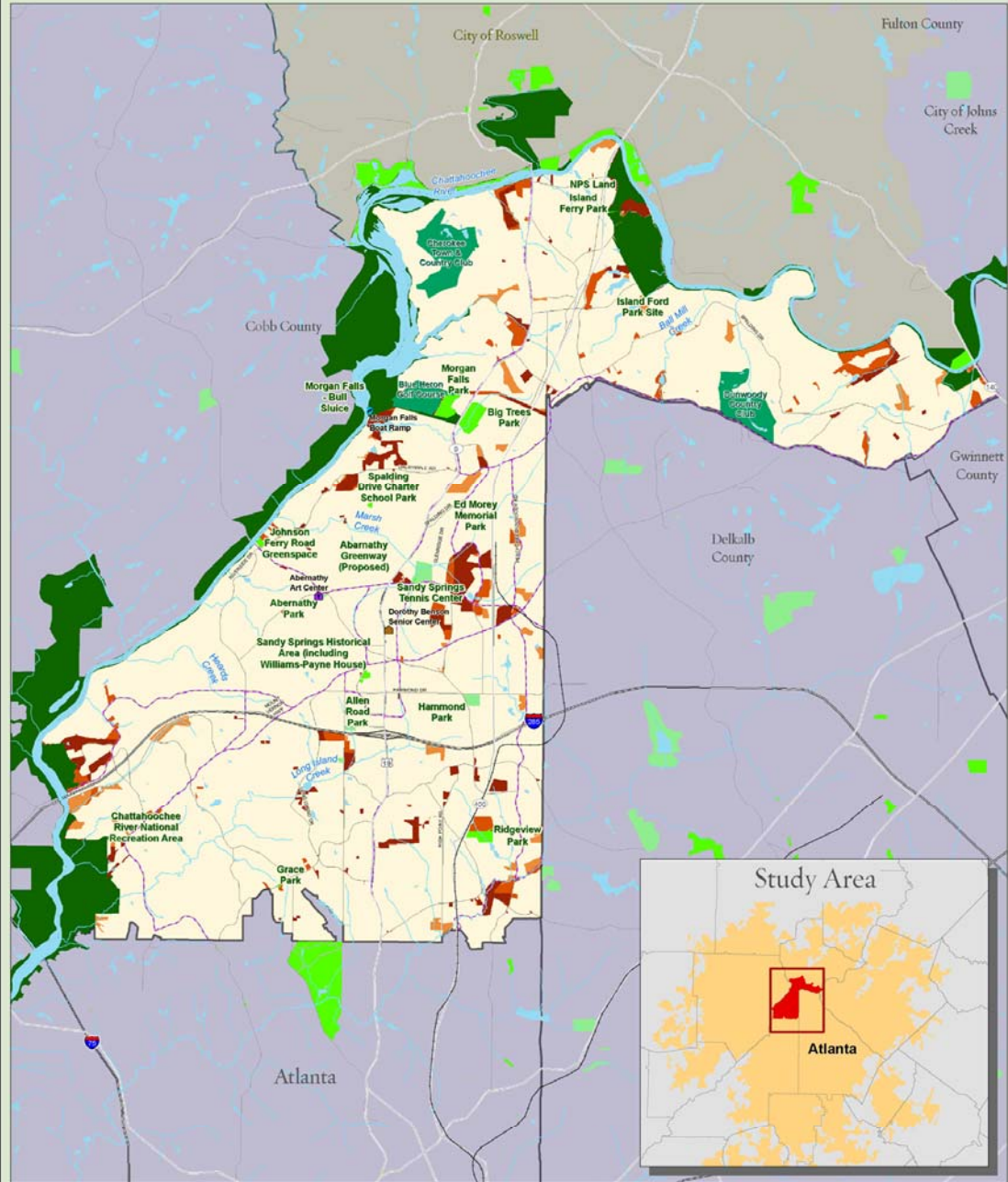
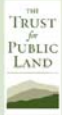
OVERALL OPPORTUNITIES

The Overall Conservation Opportunities Map rolls all of the previous viewed maps, with their underlying goals and criteria, together into one consolidated image. The resulting highlighted areas now represent where multiple Greenprint objectives – connectivity, recreation opportunity and traffic mitigation - are all met. These highlighted areas therefore represent the most optimal lands for conservation and green space acquisition in order to achieve the City's goals as defined during this Greenprint process.

The benefit of the Greenprint computer model is that the underlying data maps and layers are accessible and transparent, so that users and viewers can drill down underneath the images and identified areas to determine what goals or criteria are met by those lands.

The conservation and development of these identified lands for recreation and park purposes, will ensure the biggest 'bang for the buck' for the City when they identify the resources to pursue the desired robust green space program.

Greenprint Sandy Springs Overall Conservation Priorities



This map displays the Overall Conservation Priorities results of the Greenprint Sandy Springs prioritization analysis. The degree of priority for each area is shown with a color scale with dark red representing high priority and orange representing moderate priority.

These priorities are the result of a weighted analysis on the following goals:

Increase Recreation Opportunities	30 %
Promote Connectivity	60 %
Mitigate Traffic Congestion	10 %

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Map created by the Trust for Public Land
on November 7, 2008
Created in ArcMap 9.3i
Map Projections: NAD 83 State Plane
Georgia West FIPS 1602 Feet
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GREENPRINT IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

In reading these maps, it is important to note that they show areas of opportunity for new trails and greenways, new parks, natural resource protection. Just to clarify, these maps do not make any suggestions or statement about land-use prohibitions. The model and resulting maps provide a guide for how to responsibly grow the Sandy Springs community with a sustainable green space program in parallel. In the effort to adhere to smart growth principles, which set out to minimize sprawl and the related traffic and land use problems, these maps may be helpful in:

- Identifying future areas for greening when redevelopment occurs;
- Directing growth toward less environmentally sensitive areas by transferring development densities away from lands needed for recreational connectivity and resource preservation;
- Siting required green space and water quality features in areas identified as important to meet the Greenprint goals;
- Planning for new recreation facilities to meet population needs near new or planned development; and,
- Targeting areas for beautification to enhance business retention and recruitment.

Plans are only as good as their resulting actions, and that includes this Greenprint as well. But often well-intentioned plans overwhelm those who are poised to implement them with too many complicated steps. To avoid that gridlock, this Greenprint Sandy Springs process narrowed its focus to four key high-impact, low-investment, short-term (1-3 years) implementation strategies that could move this Greenprint from vision to on-the-ground reality.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY NO. 1 – PARCEL LEVEL PRIORITIZATION

This strategy calls for further narrowing the identified land conservation candidates shown on the maps, in order to hone in on individual parcels that represent the best opportunities that possess some characteristic(s) that distinguish them from others for consideration as the highest conservation acquisition priorities. This prioritization process utilizes the already built data models, but adds new criteria, as determined by the City, to identify lands that meet the fullness of the City's goals and plans as represented in other public documents such as the Comprehensive Plan, Tree Ordinance, Stormwater plans, etc. TPL is already committed to working with the City's GIS staff and Community Development Department on implementing this strategy.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY NO. 2 – PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

The City of Sandy Springs has already entered into a Joint-Use Agreement (JUA) with at least one public school so that their playgrounds and athletic fields may be used after normal school hours for public recreation programs. This concept of sharing resources can be expanded to other facilities for joint use as well as

possible facility enhancement, operations and maintenance. Key potential partners for this strategy include:

- Public and private schools;
- Churches, especially parking facilities;
- Corporate headquarters.
- Hospitals; and,
- Utilities, especially for the use of easements as part of the greenways and trail system.

The City will need to determine the appropriate legal mechanism and approval process for each type of institutional partner listed, as well as the appropriate liaison so that the working relationship among these various partners is seamless in the provision of green space and recreation for the residents and working citizens of Sandy Springs

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY NO. 3 – DEDICATED FUNDING SOURCE

Local conservation finance mechanisms that create a dedicated source of green space funding have the power to provide a tangible means to implement a local government's vision. With the confidence of knowing it will have money in hand at a time certain, local governments can proactively approach landowners to negotiate with them to protect land today. Dedicated funding sources allow local governments to assess their options and protect land that can meet multiple goals as well as take advantage of market opportunities, by providing them with a better bargaining position. With their own funding, local governments are also much better positioned to leverage other funding streams from state and federal governments, or private philanthropic partners.

In Georgia, the public financing options typically utilized to fund land conservation are Special Purpose Local Option Sales Taxes (SPLOSTS) and general obligation bonds. Since 1998 local communities in Georgia have held 26 voter-approved green space and conservation finance referenda, and 20 of those 26 measures have passed. That represents a 77 percent passage rate, which is one percent higher than the 76 percent national average rate. Throughout Georgia, nearly \$820 million has been raised at the county and municipal level for land conservation through these public finance measures. Because municipalities in Georgia are legally prohibited from imposing a SPLOST, any feasibility study surrounding financing options for the City of Sandy Springs would focus on two other options; general obligation bonds, which is the use of property taxes for financing land conservation, and tax credits to encourage private landowners to conserve green spaces in Sandy Springs.

- **General Obligation Bonds**

To raise funds for capital improvements, such as land acquisition or building construction, cities and counties may issue bonds.

However, cities may not issue debt for the purpose of funding on-going operations and maintenance expenses.

There are two types of bonds – general obligation (G.O.) bonds and revenue bonds. G.O bonds are guaranteed by the full faith and credit of the city and are backed by the levy of property taxes within the city. Alternatively, revenue bonds are backed by dedicated project-generated revenue streams.

- **Property Taxes**

Every municipality (and county) in Georgia has the authority under the state constitution to create a separate municipal tax district and to levy a property tax (or any other tax or fee) for the provision of parks and recreation (or any government service).¹ Although local governments have the authority to levy a property tax for any purpose, there is only one local government with a property tax for land conservation, parks or recreation in Georgia. In 1986 Gwinnett County voters created and approved a countywide recreation district (coterminous with the boundaries of the county) which can levy up to 1 mill (\$1/\$1000 of assessed property value) on all property. The resulting money that is collected flows into the county's general fund on an annual basis, although it is restricted to parks and recreation expenditure.² This kind of millage increase could be used to finance land acquisition in the City of Sandy Springs.

¹ Georgia Constitution, Counties and Municipalities, Article 9, Section 2, Paragraph 6.

² Gwinnett County 2004 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Section 2

For Sandy Springs to determine what finance option works best for its purposes and citizens, the logical next steps should involve:

- Assessing community needs and attitudes on a variety of issues, from parks and recreational needs, to other public improvements;
- Identifying the public's financial tolerance for a public funding measure, including their willingness and ability to pay, as well as defining the best type of funding source;
- Targeting the right timing for a finance measure on the ballot;
- Identifying the types of public projects (greenways, police stations, flood controls, natural or water resource protection) supported by the voters; and,
- Honing in on the messages that resonate with voters; as well as the best messengers.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY NO. 4 – DEVELOPER INCENTIVES

Because US cities' economic health is tied so intricately with their commercial and residential development, wise communities provide a slate of meaningful incentives to encourage the type of development that fulfill the vision of their communities.

Incentive zoning is one such measure allowable in the State of Georgia. This practice allows developers to transfer density credits onto other portions of their overall site plan, which creates more compact development in some areas where it is desired, in exchange for community improvements, such as open space, affordable housing, historic preservation and/or urban design.

Honing in on the highest and best opportunities to spend resources most efficiently building broad public-private partnerships for an increased menu of recreation opportunities and cost-sharing, identifying dedicated funding sources, and involving the development community in the provision of green spaces are key steps the City can take to achieve the Greenprint goals.

CONSERVATION TOOLS

At the core of this Greenprint is the belief that land conservation is fundamental for implementing all of the desired green space goals. Simply put, without land, the City cannot expand or create new parks or greenways, protect habitats, water quality, etc. The practice of effective land conservation requires the employment of a variety of both public and private tools to protect land for public enjoyment. The common thread woven among the five tools listed below is the value of conserving the lands most important to the recreational, environmental and economic needs of the City. These tools are:

- **Fee Simple Land Acquisition**
- **Conservation/Preservation Easements**
 - Donation or Purchase of Development Rights


- **Land or Improvements Value Donations**
 - The Georgia Conservation Tax Credit Program provides a financial incentive to landowners to encourage dedication of their property for conservation uses. The incentive is provided in the form of a state income tax credit that can be applied in the tax year of the donation. The total income tax credit provided under this Act cannot exceed the lesser of \$500,000 or 25 percent of the fair market value of the donated property in the year in which it was donated. For individual landowners, the total amount of the tax credit cannot exceed \$250,000. For corporate landowners, the total tax credit cannot exceed \$500,000.
- **Developer Incentives**
 - Incentive Zoning in activity nodes to increase density in exchange for greenspace and meeting City's transportation standards.
 - Streamlined Permitting as a recognition of enhanced greenspace beyond city minimums.

NEXT STEPS

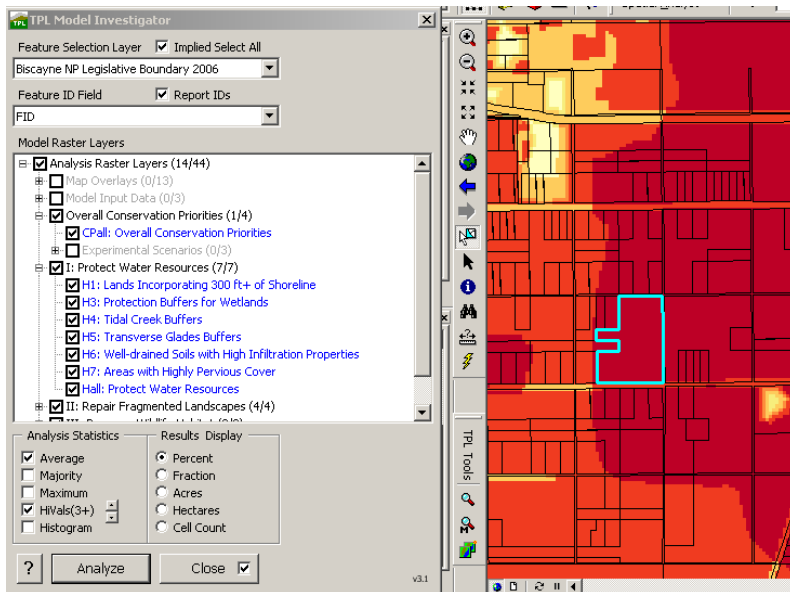
Now that the Greenprint Sandy Springs model is built, and the results can be used, the on-the-ground work begins.

Towards that end, TPL will construct a custom Internet Mapping Site (IMS) for the City of Sandy Springs, which will provide web-based, interactive model results for easy access by City staff. Users will be able to view and analyze Greenprint model results, create interactive maps using markup tools, share and print maps, save maps in private workspaces for ongoing use, visualize and query GIS data layers in order to create property-specific profiles and strategic reports.

The Model Investigator tool, unique to TPL's Greenprints, allows users to see why and how well a parcel or group of parcels scored against the Greenprint goals. This tool is essential for communicating objectively the importance of conservation for any one or group of parcels as well as for grant writing, because it provides concrete data that matches funding criteria.

<div>  <div> TPL Greenprint Resource Profile Report <small>March 2006</small> <small>Discourage Day National Park Adjacent Lands Study Area</small> </div> </div>				
		Priority Acres*	Percent of Total Area	Percent of Total Area
Overall Conservation Priorities				
	CPAll Overall Conservation Priorities	64,543	36.1%	4,461 2.5%
I. Protect Water Resources				
	H1 Lands Incorporating 300 ft+ of Shoreline	1,469	0.8%	256 0.1%
	H2 Protection Buffers for Wetlands	63,908	38.3%	6,198 2.5%
	H4 Total Creek Buffers	757	0.4%	363 0.2%
	H5 Transverse Glades Buffers	7,810	4.4%	199 0.1%
	H6 Well-drained Soils with High Infiltration Properties	71,079	39.8%	1,277 0.7%
	H7 Areas with High Previous Cover	127,474	76.3%	3,386 4.6%
	Hall Protect Water Resources	163,665	94.9%	8,706 4.9%
II. Repair Fragmented Landscapes				
	F1 Reconnections for Fragmented Mangrove Stands	6,718	8.8%	5,631 3.1%
	F2 Reconnections for Fragmented Prairies	972	0.5%	388 0.2%
	F3 Reconnection for Fragmented Forested Uplands	7,872	4.5%	1,263 0.7%
	FAll Repair Fragmented Landscapes	22,071	12.3%	6,160 3.4%
III. Preserve Wildlife Habitat				
	V1 Rare & Endangered Species Habitats	63,287	35.4%	4,389 2.4%
	VAll Preserve Wildlife Habitat	63,287	35.4%	4,389 2.4%
IV. Clarify and Protect Park Boundaries				
	P1 Vacant Lands Adjacent to Park	1,177	0.7%	110 0.1%
	PAll Clarify and Protect Park Boundaries	1,177	0.7%	110 0.1%
V. Enhance Visitor Entry to Park				
	E1 Entry Sequence to Park	698	0.4%	128 0.1%
	EAll Enhance Visitor Entry to Park	698	0.4%	128 0.1%
VI. Minimize Development Pressures				
	D1 Urban Boundaries	65,447	36.8%	3,907 2.2%
	D2 Proposed Annexations and Incorporations	26,268	14.7%	666 0.3%

Greenprint Strategic Analysis Reports



Award-winning Model Investigator Query Tool

Greenprint Sandy Springs has been developed using the best GIS data available at this time. By its nature, the model is dynamic, and may be updated as new or updated information emerges. In order to maintain the integrity of the community participation process, any update will require that a stakeholder committee be assembled and consulted, and, if necessary, the Greenprint goals and criteria re-ranked.

As land is acquired and conserved over the coming years, thereby fulfilling the City's goals, the stakeholders will need to revisit the Greenprint and make adjustments to reflect the new realities on the current and revised needs and demands.

Greenprint Sandy Springs offers city leaders, partners and residents a flexible communication tool to use for implementation of its parks, recreation and natural resource goals. This report is designed for use by the City as well as community groups and businesses to support implementation of the Greenprint, so that Sandy Springs can thrive as a great place to work, to live and to play.



The Trust for Public Land is a national, non-profit organization that conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens and other natural places, ensuring livable communities for generations to come. To learn more, go to www.tpl.org.

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